



# EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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## Workers Complete Asbestos Removal at West Valley to Prepare Facility for Demolition

**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act workers safely cleared asbestos from more than 5,500 feet of piping in the Main Plant Process Building. Project completion is an important step in preparing the former commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing building for demolition.

Recovery Act workers also cleaned up more than 1,700 square feet of material containing asbestos, mostly floor tiles in the building's former control room.

"Completion of this work is a significant accomplishment and another major step forward as we prepare the Main Plant Process Building for demolition," said Bryan Bower, the DOE Director at West Valley.

DOE is leading the cleanup of the West Valley Demonstration Project site, where the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant operated from 1966 to 1972.

Material containing asbestos was used to insulate utilities in the five-story building, a common practice in the 1960s. Friable asbestos breaks apart and crumbles easily as it ages, creating the possibility for fibers to release and become airborne. Airborne fibers can be inhaled and are considered a hazardous air pollutant under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Act.

Removing materials containing asbestos requires precise work by highly trained workers to ensure the fibers are contained. This is accomplished by wrapping or "sleeving" the work area prior to removing the material. Most of the friable material at the West Valley building was taken from overhead areas in aisles and stairways.

The asbestos removal was one of several projects at West Valley funded by \$63 million from the Recovery Act. Workers also built an underground permeable treatment wall to capture contaminants in groundwater, installed a system to remove residual radioactive liquids from waste tanks, and processed 10,155 cubic feet of radioactive waste for shipment to a permanent disposal facility.



Photos above: Recovery Act workers remove material containing asbestos from the Main Plant Process Building at the West Valley Demonstration Project to prepare the facility for demolition.

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